

Message Text

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FOR EA/ASST. DEP. SECRETARY SNEIDER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AS, US

SUBJ: BAD "NATION REVIEW" ARTICLE BASED ON LEAKS

1. SUMMARY: ARTICLE HAS BEEN PUBLISHED BASED ON AUSTRALIAN CLASSIFIED COMMUNICATIONS RE US/GOA CONFRONTATION OVER VIET NAM BOMBING RESUMPTION LAST DECEMBER. DEPARTMENT FOREIGN AFFAIRS MUCH CONCERNED AND SEEKING SOURCE OF LEAK. DO NOT BELIEVE SUBSTANCE IS PARTICULARLY DAMAGING ALTHOUGH TIMING IN CONJUNCTION BARNARD SUCCESS VERY UNFORTUNATE. END SUMMARY.

2. DFA DEPUTY SECRETARY WOOLCOTT CALLED ME LAST NIGHT TO ALERT US TO EXTREMELY UNFORTUNATE ARTICLE IN "NATION REVIEW" TO BE PUBLISHED TODAY. NR IS LEFT-LEANING AND SENSATIONALIST TABLOID WEEKLY. ARTICLE IS BASED UPON GOA DIPLOMATIC TRAFFIC BETWEEN CANBERRA AND WASHINGTON FROM DECEMBER 20, 1972 TO JANUARY 12, 1973, REPORTING MEETINGS BETWEEN FERNANDEZ, PLIMSOLL, GREEN, ROGERS WALLER, RICE, AND WHITLAM ON THE BOMBING RESUMPTION EPISODE. IT QUOTES EXTENSIVELY FROM HIGHLY CLASSIFIED CABLES, OBVIOUSLY AUTHENTIC. THERE IS NO MENTION OF DR. KISSINGER. ARTICLE IS SLANTED TO PUFF WHITLAM'S FORTHRIGHT AND TOUGH POSITION AND PORTRAYS US EMBASSY AND DEPARTMENT AS IGNORANT OF AUSTRALIAN POLITICS. QUOTATION FROM WALLER CABLE TO PLIMSOLL NAMES TOM CONLON AS AN INCOMPETENT REPORTER.

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2. WOOLCOTT WAS UPSET AND EMBARRASSED. HE SAID THERE WOULD BE

VERY THOROUGH INVESTIGATION TO UNCOVER SOURCE OF LEAK. HE HIMSELF HAD BEEN TO HOUSE OF ARTICLE'S AUTHOR, MUNGO MACCALLUM, AND HAD CHASTISED HIM. (ANOTHER JOURNALIST HAS TOLD US WOOLCOTT PHYSICALLY GRABBED COPIES OF DFA CABLES FROM MACCALLUM.) DFA HAS TELEXED TEXT OF ARTICLE TO PLIMSOLL. I HAVE AIR MAILED COPIES TO YOU.

3. SUBSTANTIVELY, I DO NOT BELIEVE WE ARE MUCH INJURED ALTHOUGH THERE IS EMPHASIS UPON "INTRANSIGENCE" OF MARSHALL GREEN. THERE SHOULD BE LITTLE OF SURPRISE TO EDUCATED PUBLIC IN MATERIAL EXCEPT FOR REFERENCE TO AUSTRALIAN EFFORTS COORDINATE JOINT DEMARCHE WITH JAPANESE AND INDONESIANS. ALSO, I, AT LEAST, WAS NOT AWARE OF WHITLAM'S THREATS REGARDING US BASES AND UN INITIATIVES. IT IS JUST MOST UNFORTUNATE TO RAKE OVER THIS OLD CONFRONTATION AT TIME OF FINE PUBLIC SUCCESS OF YOUR NEGOTIATIONS WITH BARNARD. WE ARE "NO COMMENTING" PRESS INQUIRIES AND REFERRING REPORTERS TO GOA.

4. SNEDDEN'S PRIVATE SECRETARY CALLED ME TO DISCUSS MATTER AND SAY SNEDDEN AND PEACOCK HAVE ASKED HIM FOR GUIDANCE ON BEST WAY TO HANDLE DELUGE OF PRESS QUESTIONS. I TOLD HIM IN CONFIDENCE, WHICH WILL BE HONORED, THAT WERE I IN OPPOSITION I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN:

A. WHETHER OTHER SECRET GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS WERE IN HANDS OF PRESS;
B. WHAT IMPACT SUCH GROSS LEAKS WOULD HAVE UPON CAPACITY OF GOA TO CONDUCT CONFIDENTIAL DIPLOMATIC INTERCOURSE;
C. WHETHER GOA WOULD PROSECUTE UNDER OFFICIAL SECRETS LEGISLATION.
I ALSO TOLD HIM CONLON WAS OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL POLCOUNS AND GOOD FRIEND OF AUSTRALIA.

5. MUNGO MACCALLUM IS CLOSE TO ALP AND WHITLAM IS GODFATHER OF HIS CHILD. HOWEVER, I DOUBT VERY MUCH THAT PRIME MINISTER, WHO IS REPORTEDLY FURIOUS, WAS BEHIND THIS. I GATHER THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION AND EXCESSIVE DISTRIBUTION OF MESSAGES DURING EARLY DAYS OF WHITLAM GOVERNMENT SO LEAK MAY NOT BE EASY TO FIND.

6. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF MACCALLUM LEAD-IN SUMMARY OF ARTICLE.

7. BEGIN QUOTE "DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER, LANCE BARNARD, IS IN WASHINGTON TRYING TO NEGOTIATE SOME CONCESSIONS FROM THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT OVER US BASES IN AUSTRALIA.
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8. "THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN CANBERRA, MARSHALL GREEN, IS STILL CARRYING ON HIS MUTUAL HATE-HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH PRIME MINISTER GOUGH WHITLAM OVER EXACTLY HOW AMERICAN AND AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN POLICH SHOULD INTERACT.

9. "JIM CAIRNS, STILL IN HIS ROLE AS ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER, IS HAPPILY CONTINUING TO BUCKET US VIETNAM POLICY. WHITLAM IS PUBLICLY

MAKING SMALL TUT-TUTTING NOISES OF OBJECTION, BUT AFTER WHAT HAPPENED THIS TIME LAST YEAR, WHITLAM IS PROBABLY NOT ALL THAT CONCERNED.

10. "AT THIS TIME LAST YEAR RELATIONS WERE IN A STATE OF CHAOS AFTER AUSTRALIA HAD MADE UNPRECEDENTED PROTESTS AGAINST THE AMERICAN RESUMPTION OF THE BOMBING OF VIETNAM AT A TIME WHEN AUSTRALIA--AND THE REST OF THE WORLD-- WAS HOPING THAT PEACE WAS IMMINENT. THINGS WERE NOT SMOOTH--BUT JUST HOW ROUGH THEY WERE HAS NEVER BEEN REVEALED.

11. "'NATION REVIEW'" HAS STUMBLERD ACROSS A SERIES OF 'CONFIDENTIAL,' 'SECRET,' AND 'TOP SECRET' CABLES FROM THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT IN CANBERRA TO THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON, AND VICE VERSA, WHICH FOR THE FIRST TIME TELLS THE STORY OF WHAT HAPPENED THEN, AND PERHAPS GIVES SOME INSIGHT INTO WHAT IS LIKELY TO HAPPEN FROM NOW ON.

12. "AMONG OTHER THINGS THE CABLES REVEAL:
--WHITLAM'S ACCEPTANCE, NOT ONLY OF THE PRESENT STATUS OF US DEFENSE BASES IN AUSTRALIA, BUT OF THE CONTINUING EXISTENCE OF THE SEATO TREATY.

--WHITLAM'S ABORTIVE PLAN FOR A DRAMATIC JOINT PROTEST BY AUSTRALIA, INDONESIA AND JAPAN AGAINST US-VIETNAM POLICY ON CHRISTMAS EVE 1972.

--CANBERRA'S OPEN DISTRUST OF THE REPORTS GOING BACK TO WASHINGTON FROM THE EMBASSY IN CANBERRA--AND THE NAME OF THE MAN THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT MOST DISTRUSTED.

--THE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS BY THE PRESENT AMBASSADOR TO CANBERRA, MARSHALL GREEN, TO ACT AS A GO-BETWEEN FROM THE WHITE HOUSE TO THE AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, SIR JAMES PLIMSOLL.
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--WHITLAM'S WELL CONCEALED HARD LINE STANCE WITH THE US OVER VIETNAM POLICY, AND IN PARTICULAR HIS BATTLES WITH THE THEN AMBASSADOR TO AUSTRALIA, WALTER RICE; AND HIS FIGHTS WITH THE MORE INTRANSIGENT HEAD OF THE EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS DESK IN THE STATE DEPARTMENT, MARSHALL GREEN--WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY CONTRIBUTED TO NIXON'S DECISION TO REPLACE THE FORMER WITH THE LATTER.

--AND THE TOTAL FUCKUP IN US-AUSTRALIAN RELATIONS WHICH TOOK PLACE AFTER LABOR GAINED POWER IN DECEMBER 1972, LARGELY AS A RESULT OF IGNORANCE AND UNPREPAREDNESS BY THE BUREAUCRATS IN WASHINGTON." END QUOTE.
HARROP

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